

# *Pax Animi:*

A

SHORT TREATISE

Declaring

How necessary the Tran-  
quility and Peace of the  
M. nd is, and how it may  
be obtained.

---

Written in S P A N I S H, by the  
V. R. F.

*Fray Pedro de Alcantara*

Of the Holy Order of

St. F R A N C I S.

And Translated into ENGLISH  
by T. W. Esq.

---

*Pax Dei quæ exsuperat omnem sensum cu-  
stodiat corda vestra & intelligentias ve-  
stras in Christo Jesu Domino nostro.*

---

P A R I S, 1665.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

1215 Broadway New York City

217 West 4th Street

NEW YORK

1897

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

1215 Broadway New York City

1897



\*\*\*\*\*:\*\*\*\*\*


*To the Right Reverend and  
Religious Lady,*

MO<sup>r</sup>. BRIDGET MORE,

*Prioresse of the English  
Benedictine Nuns at*

P A R I S.

M A D A M,

 N grateful exchange  
and acknowledg<sup>mt</sup>  
of the many encour-  
agements to Piety which I  
have received from your La-  
dyship, as well by the several  
Treatises of your V. R. F.

A 3.

Aug.

## The Epistle

*Aug. Baker* communicated to me, as by your charitable conversation and correspondence; and above all, that good odour of Devotion and lustre of Vertue, which by the admirable order of Gods providence breaks forth most abundantly from the most hidden Retraits and Lives of his Servants, I make bold to present you with a plain translation of two short pieces, extremely conformable (if I mistake not venturing to judge of things wherein I have so little skill) to the spirit both of your said late happy Director, & of your self and Family, in whom the fertile product and increase



## *Dedictory.*

crease, given by God, so am-  
ply testifies to the World the  
advantages of his blessed  
Plantations, and Irrigations.  
If by his means who was so  
great a Master of Spirituality,  
so indefatigable a searcher  
into all parts for these hidden  
treasures of Grace, you have  
perhaps already seen them,  
either in their originals, or  
some other traduction, un-  
known to me; I am sure you  
will not think much to peruse  
them again, for my sake as  
well as your own, and give  
God thanks I have been once  
in my life not ill employed.  
And indeed as little as I am  
able to relish spiritual mat-  
ters,

## The Epistle

ters, I must say it hath been a great joy to me to perceive that experimentally verified, which *St. Peter* with no less admiration found and professes in the case of *Cornelius*, *Act. 10*. That in truth God is not an acceptor of persons, but in all Nations hath those who fear him, and pursuing Justice are acceptable to him. For though at first sight the Deviations and corruptions in point of Discipline and Manners seem so universal, that not onely secular, but even Religious persons and Communities incur a promiscuous censure of total prevarication from their Institutes,



## *Dedicatory.*

tutes, and even the strict duties of Christianity; yet upon better reflection & more mature deliberation, it wil appear that there are innumerable holy souls in all parts of the Church where God Almighty still delights to dwell among the sons of men; and by his all-powerful grace, of Vessels of wrath and iniquity fitted for destruction, frames to himself Vessels of Election, and fit Tabernacles for his holy Spirit. This hath the little experience I have had abroad in the World given me to understand; this these Devout Treatises from *Spain* and *Italy,*

## The Epistle

*Italy*; this many others of the like nature from *France* and *Flanders* (for these pious and abstracted souls maintain a perfect peace towards God and one another, in the midst and in despite of Wars and worldly tumults) this the harmonious consent of many excellent persons of our own Nation; and to particularize at least in one, the Divinely Amorous Confessions of your late Reverend and Admirable Sister, Mother *Gertrude More* of *Cambray*, abundantly confirms to me; who dare not license my self to vouch your own example, lest producing  
to



## *Dedicatory.*

to the World the Gifts you  
with so much caution con-  
ceal from it, I unawares  
offend against, or become  
instrumental to the viola-  
tion of that profound hu-  
mility, happy obscurity,  
entire confidence, and ab-  
solute Dependance ( free  
from the sollicitudes of hu-  
mane prudence ) on the  
All-sufficient Providence of  
God, which I so singula-  
ry venerate, and would  
otherwise so willingly pro-  
pose, as a just Model, to  
the imitation of all other  
Holy Communities. But  
it is time, Madam, to beg  
your

*The Epistle, &c.*

your Pardon ; and with it  
your fervent supplications for  
the Divine Pardon upon

MADAM,

Your Ladyships most

humble and most

devoted Servant

1665.

T. W.

---

A



A  
**SHORT TREATISE**  
 Declaring  
 How necessary the Tran-  
 quility and Peace of the  
 Mind is, and how it may  
 be obtained.

C H A P. I.

*Of the nature of our Heart, and how  
 it must be governed.*



You are to understand  
 that God hath given you  
 a noble Heart, created  
 only to love him, to u-  
 nite and as it were melt and in-  
 corporate it self into him. By love  
 you may bring it to do whatsoe-

B

ver

ver you please : and as on the one side, being enamoured of Vertue the hardest things become easie and pleasant to you ; so on the other, if by your own strength without love you attempt the least things, you shall find them not only difficult, but altogether impossible. First therefore establish firmly the bent and inclination of your Heart, that whatsoever you do exteriorly, may have its root and principle in the interior : for though penance and austerities are commendable (used with discretion according to every ones necessity and condition, yet shall you never thereby arrive at true Vertue, if they are not founded in, and regulated by the interior ; but rather grasp at Vanity, and the empty shadow of Glory. *A continual warfare is the life of man upon earth, saith holy*



holy Job, and in order to the good success thereof, you must alwayes stand upon your guard and watch: which watch consists in subduing, pacifying, and quieting all the movements of the soul, so that whatsoever tempest of passion, or breath of sensuality begins to arise, you immediately calm it before it hath produced any disorder there. Be sure you do this upon every the least disturbance, either in, or out of Prayer: and then shall you know to pray as you ought, when you have thus learnt to act, and discharge the duty of your station. And this must be done, not with force, but sweetness, since nothing is more opposite to Peace of spirit than Violence.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Care the Soul must take to  
pacifie it self.*

**P**Lace then above and before  
all things this peace.  
Watch upon your senses, and  
without any violence; but on  
the contrary, with much serenity  
and security, it will carry you on  
to great atchievements. With this  
Peace, sent by God, you will be  
able to watch, pray, obey, and suf-  
fer all injuries without difficulty,  
or the least repining. And though  
till you arrive at this, for want of  
experience, you may encounter  
hardships enough, yet shall your  
soul find much consolation with-  
all, and every day gain new ad-  
vantages and skill to make a bet-  
ter



ter defence in future. If at any time you are in more than ordinary distress, so that this Peace seems to be fled from you, have immediate recourse to Prayer, and persevere there, in imitation of Christ our Redeemer, who to give us example, prayed thrice in the Garden, to his eternal Father, that we might not go about to seek any other remedy, or cease to use this, till we find our Wills entirely pacified and conformed to the Will of God. And if the temptation or disorder found you employed in corporal exercise, be not too eager to persist, or strive too much to finish the same in a set time, but proceed calm and moderately; reflecting that it is your principal affair to have God always with great tranquility before your eyes; with little regard to give content to any but

B 3

him.

*Peace of*

him. And if any other consideration mingle and insinuate it self you shall soon perceive the storm and disquiet it will raise in your soul, and by thus rising and falling come evidently to discover that all our misery is from self-love, whilest we covet to have all things after our own way, and disturb and discompose our selves when we fail thereof.

---

C H A P. III.

*How by little and little we are to  
build this habitation of Peace.*

**H**AVE a care never to permit your Heart to become sad, concern'd, or solicitous for whatsoever happens, but let your whole endeavour be to keep and preserve this Peace, since our  
Lord



Lord tells us, *Blessed are the Peaceful.* Thus doing he will come and build himself a City of Peace in your soul, a house of delights. He requires no more on your part, but that as often as your senses mutiny, you return to suppress and quiet them, stilling all your powers, movements, thoughts and actions. But as a City is not built in one day, so neither in one day ought you to pretend to this internal Peace, it being no less a work than to build a house for God, and Temple for his Holy Spirit; although indeed he be the principal Architect, and without him all your labour were in vain. Now the corner stone and chief foundation of this structure is humility.

## C H A P. I V.

*To purchase this Peace, the Soul  
must renounce all other Comforts.*

**T**Hat this important foundation of Humility may be solidly and durably laid, you must endeavour to embrace with open arms and sisterly affection all tribulations; desiring to be contemned and vilified by all the world, and to have no comforter but only God: This judgment and maxime must take firm root and absolute possession of your soul, that God alone is all your joy and welfare; all things else to you no other than thorns and bryars. Accustom your Soul to entertain it self with God, think if you were carryed to receive  
some



some affront, or confusion, with what content and alacrity you would go suffering with joy in his presence & for his love; and valuing or seeking no other honour whatsoever, but so to suffer for him and his glory. When any reprehension, injury, or contempt befalls you, cherish it as as hidden and unknown treasure, as a purifying expiation of all your former transgressions. Desire not in this life the affection or esteem of any creature; Let no body make any account of you, or so much as take notice there is such an one in being as your self; but as the greatest of kindness, leave you to suffer with Christ crucified. And above all, defend your self against your self, as against the worst of enemies; never follow your own will, judgment, or inclination, unless

you wilfully seek your own ru-  
ine; and when your Affection  
leads you to any thing though  
never so holy, represent it naked-  
ly, with profound Humility, in  
the sight of God, beseeching  
him to bring to pass his own ho-  
ly will in it, as he sees good;  
and this with entireness and fer-  
vour of heart, without any mix-  
ture of self-love, knowing that  
of your self you are nothing,  
have nothing, nor can secure  
your self in those desires and  
judgments which carry a shew  
of Sanctity, Peace, and indiscreet  
Zeal, of which our Lord saith,  
*Beware of false Prophets which  
come to you in the cloathing of  
sheep but are in reality ravening  
wolves; by their fruits you shall know  
them.* The fruit of such tempta-  
tions is to leave in the soul dis-  
quiet and dissatisfaction. What-  
soever



soever withdraws from Humility, from internal Peace and Tranquility, be the pretext never so specious, it is a false Prophet and a ravenous Wolf, which under the cover of the sheep's skin comes to deprive you of the Vertues most essential to your advancement, and in a moment devour what with much time and industry you have amassed. By how much more appearance of sanctity the thing hath, by so much more strictly doth it require to be examined; but still without violation of your interior peace and quiet, as hath been said. And if at any time you fail in any of these directions, trouble not, but rather humble yourself before our Lord; acknowledging your own weakness, and take heed for the future; perhaps it was permitted to abase and

and quell some secret Pride which you were not aware of. And if moreover the sparks of extinct vices or concupiscences revive now and then, and threaten your soul, be not dismayed, but redouble your watch, and gently withdraw your spirits and settle them in peace; neither afflicting your self nor rejoicing, nor growing angry, but preserving your soul pure and calm for the operation of God, whom you will certainly find within your own breast, and be by him convinced that the Divine Aim is always at our good and advantage; though we have never so much difficulty to apprehend it in the cases aforesaid.



## C H A P. V.

*How the Soul is to keep it self solitary that God may work in it.*

**Y**OU cannot make too much accompt of your Soul where God resides and delights himself: set so high a value thereon, that you disdain and scorn to permit any thing else to enter in and defile it. Let your whole expectation be fixt on the coming of your Lord, who desires to find it in that free and happy posture, without any other thought, any other wish, any other will or tendency. Seek not, of your own head without the advice of your spiritual Father, Crosses which you may pretend to suffer for God; but let God dispose

dispose of you to suffer for his sake what and how he pleases. Do not you do that which you have a mind to, but let God do in you what he hath a mind to. Let your will be on all hands at free liberty, your affections perfectly disengaged, wish no one thing more than another; but if you needs must, let it be of such sort, that if not it, but the contrary happen, you receive no trouble but equal satisfaction. This is true liberty, to adhere to nothing, to have no dependance, no byass. God works not his wonders but in such a solitary and dis-interested soul. Happy solitude where the Walls of *Jerusalem* are re-edified! Desert of pleasure, Banishment above all fruition of Friends and Countrey, where God himself is so securely enjoyed!



joyed ! Take nothing with you  
for this journey ; put off your  
shoes, for it is a holy Land, sa-  
lute no body in the way ; leave  
the dead to bury their dead. To  
the land of the living you are  
travelling, let nothing mortal  
bear you company.

---

## C H A P. VI.

*Of the Discretion to be used in the  
love of our Neighbour, that it may  
not prejudice this Peace.*

**E**Xperience will inform you  
this is the ready way to E-  
ternity ; for immediately Chari-  
ty, or the Love of God and your  
Neighbour will abundantly pour  
forth it self in your soul. Christ  
assures us, *He came to send fire into  
the world, and desires no other but*

*that it burn.* But though the love of God hath no limit, yet that towards our Neighbour must not exceed its bounds, least to edify others we destroy our selves. Never do any action only for example sake or edification of others, for instead of uncertain gain to them, you will bring undoubted loss to your self. Do all things with simplicity and purity, with no other regard but to render your self acceptable to God. Humble your self in all your works, and you shall come to understand how little of your self you can profit any one by them. Consider that zeal of souls cannot justify or recompence the loss of your own peace. Have a longing desire that all may comprehend this Truth which you have attained, and inebriate themselves with this precious liquor which God so



love  
at to  
no  
dis  
Ne  
am  
ers  
to  
ng  
it  
let  
d.  
ur  
n-  
lf  
h  
t  
f  
so freely promiseth to all *gratis*.  
This thirst of your Neighbors  
good is comendable indeed,  
having received it from the  
hand of our Lord, not acq-  
red it by your own solicitude or  
indiscreet Zeal. God must plant  
it in your Heart, and reap it when  
he pleases. Do not you presume  
to till or sow, but keep the field  
of your Soul free and well weed-  
ed, and let God sow it in his good  
season. He desires to find your  
soul stript and dis-engaged, that  
he may engage, unite, and firmly  
bind it to himself. Let Him make  
choice of you for his workman;  
sit down, and with a holy Idleness  
and Denudation of mind expect  
till he hire you. Abandon all so-  
licitude, and steer your course a-  
lone & unencumbered, that God  
may cloath you with himself; who  
will give you what it cannot en-  
ter

ter into your thought to desire, if you forgetting your self your soul live only to his love. Thus it will come to pass that with all diligence, or to speak more properly without any diligence at all on your part, which may in the least discompose your quiet; you will be able to calm and pacifie all your transports & fervours with much moderation, God conserving in you all Peace and Tranquility. For thus to be silent, is to pierce Heaven with our cries, thus to be idle, is the happiest and most gainful of all negotiations, uniting the Soul with God, disuniting it from all other objects whatsoever. And this must pass without thinking that you for your part do any thing, where God must do all, who desires nothing from you in this silent posture but that you humble your



your self before him, and offer him a heart dis-engaged from all terrestrial propensions, with longing desire that the Divine will may perfectly be accomplished in you.

---

CHAP. VII.

*That the Soul is not to seek after Regalo's, or any sensible delight, but only God.*

**Y**OU must always encline to choose the suffering side, and rejoyce to be with those who least care for you, and keep you most in subjection. In fine, every thing must be a motive to you to direct you to God, without trifling away time by the way. When all things else grow bitter and distasteful and God alone  
your

your delight, then shall you possess true comfort. Address all your miseries to our Dear Lord who is the Mediatour betwix **G**od and Man. Love him, open to him your heart, and communicate with him all the secrets thereof, without the least fear or reserve. He will satisfie all your doubts, his paternal and tender care will raise you whensoever you fall; he will absolve and communicate you spiritually, as often as you shall duly prepare your self, being, as he is, The Eternal Priest. When your Confessor casts you off, and refuseth to administer you the Sacraments as often as you beg leave to frequent them, go with a pious confidence and thirst to this our dear and Dread Lord, who though he gave the Keys of his Treasurie to *St. Peter*, did not deprive himself

not-



notwithstanding of them. As often as you thus approach him, he will give you a true Jubilee or Plenary indulgence: nay, loving him, you are become already Superintendent and Master of all his Goods. Offer your self then a sacrifice to God in perfect repose and peace of Spirit: and that you may courageously travel on this road without fainting, enlarge your heart at every step, knowing that the greater Vessel you carry, the more you may receive; and dispose your will to acquiesce in that which you find to be Gods; not barely purposing, or resolving, but working and cooperating withal; lest it befall you as it did *St. Peter*, who resolutely protested he would die with Christ, but soon after denied him; Why? because he made the said determination of his own stock, finding

finding in himself a desire and will; which though good, as in this case, yet becomes often dangerous, and cause of great ruin, if our will presume to think of with any thing of its own strength without the Divine Assistance. For your part never want a good will, but withal, never will not affect any thing more than other, loosen on every side the strings, as I may say, and inclinations of your heart, having no other aim every moment, but to render your self acceptable to God, as hath been said, and must be often repeated. And whatsoever you are doing, never conclude or make any determination for the next moment to come, but preserve your liberty entire. Yet this is not understood to forbid discreet solicitude concerning what is of necessity for every ones state



state or condition ; for that being according to the order of God, hindereth not the peace and true spiritual progress we are advancing. In every circumstance resolve, and execute immediately what you have resolved, so far as concerns your interior, or can be brought to pass there ; and of the exterior be not at all solicitous. That which in this instant at least may be done, is to offer your will to God ; more neither seek, nor pretend to ; look upon your self as a poor cripple, conscious of your own impotence, and you will find cause alwayes to rejoyce, that at least for one moment you are in perfect liberty ; which liberty you may no less obtain at all other times. In this spiritual liberty consists the sum of your perfection ; and as long, and no longer than it continues shall

shall you enjoy a Divine and ravishing servitude.

---

CHAP. VIII.

*That the Soul must not be dejected, though it experience repugnance of obstacles in it self against this Peace.*

**B**Ut you must expect to find your self often disturbed and deprived of this happy solitude and perfect liberty : and the little whirlwinds within you of your own passions, will raise up dust of distractions and disorders, against which our Lord will provide and send down his heavenly dews, not only to allay and suppress the said dust, but moreover to cause the dry and barren earth of your heart, to fructifie and  
pro-

prod  
flow  
very  
than  
and,  
the  
Crow  
ever  
more  
"th  
"in  
"Tr  
"in  
"Ia  
"me  
"or  
"mo  
thus  
God  
be d  
so so  
self  
form  
as y



roduce new and odoriferous  
flowers, which may render you e-  
very day more agreeable to God  
than other. From this intercourse,  
and, as it were, continual battail,  
the Saints of God reaped their  
Crowns and Victories. Whatso-  
ever difficulty assaults you, say no  
more, but "Lord behold here  
thy servant, be thy will fulfilled  
in me ; I know, my Lord, thy  
Truth cannot fail for ever, and  
in it is all my confidence ; here  
I am, do what thou wilt with  
me, I am thine, nor hath any  
other any share or interest in  
me. Blessed is that soul that  
thus shall offer it self a Victim to  
God, as often soever as it begins to  
be disquieted. But if you shall not  
so soon be able to recollect your  
self in the encounter, and to con-  
form your will to Almighty Gods,  
as you desire, be not disheartned ;  
C ic

it is a Cross which Christ bids you take up and follow him, who for your example bore it first, whilst in the Garden his humanity refusing and loath to undergo the sufferings at hand, cried out, *Father if it be possible let this chalice pass from me.* But then immediately returning to put his soul in its accustomed solitude, as having his will free, disinterested, and wholly disengaged, he adds with profound humility, *Thy will, not mine be done.* Thus you must imitate our great pattern Christ, who gave himself wholly an Example for us. Lose no courage when you perceive that oft you would be glad to avoid the Combat. Persevere in Humility and Prayer till you have lost your own will, and obtained a full desire, that the will of God may take place and be performed in you. Fight manfully



fully, to the end nothing but God alone may harbour in your soul, though for never so short a time. Conceive not the least gall or bitterness in any thing, but pass over, without regard, the malice and evil attempts of others, as a child, in simplicity, without the least resentment or repining.

---

## C H A P. IX.

*Of the industry the Devil uses to hinder this Peace, and the counter-care we must have to prevent his ambusches.*

**A**S our adversaries custom is to go about continually seeking whom he may devour, so there is nothing he more desires than that you abandon this humility and simplicity, and particular-

C 2

lar-

larly that you attribute something to your self, to your own industry or diligence, or pass at least some little censure on others, as believing that you are more sedulous, and dispose your self better for receiving the gifts of God, and consequently in your own thoughts undervaluing some others; for the least of these things would give him passage into your soul, there being no other door he more desires to enter by, than that of Self-esteem. And if you are not extreamly vigilant, and with all speed return to confound, destroy and annihilate your self, as hath been said, he will cause you to fall into Pride, with the Pharisee in the Gospel, who gloried in his own vertues, and took upon him to pass sentence on the vices of others. If by this Stragem he get possession of your soul,



soul, he will presently master it, and lodge whole troops of wickedness therein, to your exceeding damage and the manifest danger of your total ruine. For this cause our great Lord and Captain commands us to watch and pray; which you are to execute with continual wariness, that the enemy get no opportunity to deuest and rob you of your chiefest treasure, this Peace of mind. There is nothing he uses more subtilty and pains about; for if once the soul live discomposed and disquiet, he well knows that all destruction is at hand. A peaceful soul does all things with facility, exactness, and perseverance, and easily resists all impediments. A troubled soul doth nothing as it ought; the little it endeavours is with much imperfection, whereof it soon grows weary, and

in fine, suffers a long but fruitless martyrdom. If then you aspire at victory, and to secure what you have conquered, against so malignant and so indefatigable an Adversary, be sure you admit into your soul no molestation, even for one single moment, upon what presence or subject whatsoever. And that you may the better discover his Arts in this case, take this general and constant Rule, that every thought which withdraws or diminishes your love for, or confidence in God, is a Messenger of Hell, and as such ought to be repulsed, and cast forth: The office of the Holy Ghost is to draw souls every moment nearer to God, inflaming them with his love, and begetting new confidences; the Devils task is always opposite; and to this end he serves himself of all means possible,



ble, suggesting fears, aggravating above measure our daily frailties, making us believe our soul hath not disposed it self as it ought, either for Confession, Communion, or Prayer; and consequently he renders it distrustful, timorous, and disconsolate: the want of Gust, or sensible Devotion in prayer, and other pious exercises, he causes to be received with impatience, giving to understand that without it all is lost, and the said work had been better let alone. At last he brings us to so high a diffidence and distraction, that we conclude all we do, or have done, is in vain, or rather pernicious; whence our fear and agony increases to that degree, that we almost repute our selves abandoned by God; whereas in truth it fares with us quite contrariwise; for innumerable are

the advantages which spring from aridities and want of Devotion, if the soul be but aware of the gracious design of God therein, keeping herself on her part close to Humility, Patience, and Perseverance. For as *St. Gregory* instructs us, Prayer made with faith and confidence is very acceptable to God, though the soul find it self dry, and without any gust therein. If she persevere with firm loyalty, let her distraction and bitterness be what it will, so that she even conceives she cannot think one good thought, that Prayer is not lost, or of no effect, for this very tribulation quietly and with resignation undergone, solicites and negotiates for us in the sight of God, and this bitterness is pleasing to him; and (if we may believe *St. Gregory*) more efficaciously than any other exercise



cise prevails with, and as we may say, even compells Almighty God to be propitious to us. Whence we infer, that aridity and disquiet of mind, ought never to make us desist from any good work; for that were both to gratifie the Devil in what he most covets, and deprive our selves of a singular advantage. And that you may the better comprehend this, and not receive hurt for want of advice, where you might otherwise reap much fruit, I will here briefly recite the benefits arising from an humble perseverance in these dry and bitter exercises, that the Peace of your soul may not be impaired by them.

## C H A P. X.

*That inward temptations ought not  
to disquiet the soul.*

**I**Nfinite are the advantages  
which these spiritual bitter-  
nesses and aridities bring to the soul,  
if received with humility and  
Patience, which could she but  
imagine, she would not be so con-  
cerned and troubled at them. And  
indeed it were enough for her sa-  
tisfaction (if there were no more  
in it) to know that God for the  
most part sends them not as sub-  
jects of sadness and dejection, but  
most assuredly quite contrary:  
so that we are not to take them as  
marks of God's displeasure or ha-  
tred and aversion to us, but em-  
brace them as most kind tokens  
of



of his favour towards us. And this we shall clearly perceive, if we reflect, that they happen not, but to such as desire to signalize themselves in the service of God, and the abandonment of all that may displease him. When did we ever hear notorious sinners, and those who set up their rest in this world, complain of the like temptations? which convinces us they are a banquet prepared by God for his best beloved, and though unfavoury, yet more wholesome than we are aware of, let their appearance be never so loathsome and frightful, to that degree that the very imagination of them scandalizes, confounds, and even overwhelms us. Nay the more horrid and filthy the temptation is, the more it affrights, afflicts, and humbles us, and consequently more advances the design.

sign of God, though the soul perceive it not, and therefore abhors it, and seeks another way to walk in, because it would alwayes be caressed and regaled, and esteems all else lost time, and pain without profit.

---

## CHAP. XI.

*How God sends these Temptations  
for our good.*

**W**E are, all mankind, naturally proud, ambitious, lovers of our own wayes and sentiments, ever presuming our selves more than we are. This self esteem is so prejudicial and opposite to true spiritual progress, that the very scent; or contagious stench thereof, at what distance soever, is enough to blast  
all



all hopes of perfection. Which is the cause why our good God is so solicitous to put us in a condition wherein we may avoid the danger, and as it were, *per-force*, arrive at true knowledge of ourselves: Thus he dealt with his Apostle St. *Peter*, permitting that he should deny him; to the end he might know himself, and knowing, confide no longer in his own strength. Thus to the other great Apostle St. *Paul* was given by him that vexatious temptation of the flesh, that acknowledging his natural infirmity, he might humble himself; and, as the said Apostle expresses it, not be extolled by the multitude of Revelations and heavenly favours he had received. And in like manner the Divine Goodness compassionating our miseries, and perverse inclinations, suffers many foul and abominable

minable temptations to befall us, that we may become humble and sensible of our own nothingness, though at present we perceive not the advantage. For the goodness and wisdom of God, never appears more manifest than by converting to our emolument that which seems to us most detrimental, by procuring us true humility, which is that we have greatest need of: And so it ordinarily falls out, that he who finds in himself such wretched thoughts, such indevotions, such spiritual barrenness and drought, imputes all to the excess of his own imperfectness, and makes account that he whose soul is encombred, and serves God with so much distraction and lukewarmness, can of himself do nothing; it seeming to him that none but abandoned people, and the scum of



of the world can furnish and entertain such thoughts as he experienceth. Whence he who formerly thought himself somebody, by vertue of this Medicine sent him from above, begins now to esteem himself the vilest creature in the World, and altogether unworthy the name of a Christian. Which profound humility he had never attained, if those dreadful temptations, and extraordinary tribulations had not in a manner compelled him thereto; which is a wonderful favour of God towards souls which he knows to stand in need of that cure. But besides this, there are many other advantages which accrew to the soul from such temptations and want of Devotion; for he who labours under this affliction, is as it were constrained to have recourse to God, and pursue vertue,  
as

as the onely remedy of his evil, and to avoid this martyrdom gladly quits all occasion of sin, and all appearance of imperfection: so that the tribulation which at first seemed to be so pernicious to him, is now become a spur to prick him forward to run with more fervor in the ways of God, and fly more swiftly from whatsoever is displeasing to him. Finally the pains and toil a soul by these sterilities endures, is an amorous Purgatory, and (if suffered with patience and humility, as hath been inculcated) a matter of great reward and glorious crown in Heaven. All this have I deduced at large, that it may be understood how little reason we have to grieve and disturb our selves at these indevotions and spiritual tepidities, and to sacrifice to them our internal

Peace



Peace, as unexperienced persons use to do, who attribute to the Devil, or their own sins, that which the hand of God hath sent, and take the marks of his love for marks of hatred, and his divine favours and careffes, for arguments of his forgetfulness, or aversion to them; in which disposition they go on, thinking that all is fruitless and lost which they have done, and their perdition inevitable; whereas in truth nothing at all is lost, but all proceeds from the great goodness and mindfulness of God towards us. If they could thoroughly believe this, they would not disorder themselves, nor forfeit the Peace and serenity of their minds for whatever tribulation, or imagination, or want of Devotion in Prayer, or other holy Exercise; but on the contrary, with new courage

**courage** and **perseverance** they would humble their souls before God, purposing by all means, and in all circumstances to fulfil the divine Will, be it in what manner soever he that sees good to exercise us in this world; and conserving themselves in perfect rest and tranquility, as they who accept whatever happens from the hand of a most indulgent Father; and instead of repining, or any bitterness of heart, render him every moment new, fervorous, and most affectionate thanks; and persevere thus doing till it become ealie to them to perform it, without the least loss of time, or diminution of internal Peace of mind.



## CHAP. XII.

*What remedy the Soul is to use that she may not be disquieted by her failings and imperfections.*

**I**F at any time your weakness precipitate you into a neglect of what you are to do, or want of caution in what you say; into passion upon some accident, into detraction, or at least consent to hear others detract, into immoderate laughter, curiosity, or suspicion, or whatsoever other failing, be it once or oftner, or many times into the same fault, and that after most formal and solemn purposes to be watchful and fall no more; yet let nothing of all this trouble or discomfort you, or make you with anxiety reflect

reflect upon what is past, or procure new motives of grief to reproach and confound your self with, as concluding you shall never gain ground in your endeavours to amend, that you take not the right way to it, for if you did, you should never fall so often as you daily do, and for the most part find your self most weak and inconstant where you make strongest resolutions, and the like. All this begets sadness, and dejection of mind, oppressing the soul with a thousand terrors, sometimes, as it hath been said, making it despair of attaining any higher degree of perfection; otherwhile making it to accuse its own imperfection and weak determination as the cause. At another time it will seem to you that you undertook to serve God only in jest, and consequently you will be



be ashamed to have recourse to him any more, or appear in his presence, as having been disloyal. And hence it comes to pass that these scrupulous persons cast away much time in thinking and speculating with themselves, how long the distraction lasted; of what nature, or how enormous the crime was; if it were a full consent, if wilfully procured or entertained, if they had any desire to be quit of it or no, if at last they rejected it, or would have continued longer in it: and the more they think on it, the less they comprehend, and the sadder they grow: then comes a disturbance and confusion when they go about to prepare for Confession; after much time lost in examination, they approach at last with fear; and having Confessed, find themselves nothing more at ease; it seeming to them that they have

have not told all, or at least not fully explicated every circumstance; Thus they train an unhappy, irksome, and unquiet life, ceasing to advance, and losing great part of their merit; only for want of knowing their natural infirmity, and the way how they are to treat with God; with whom, after having incurr'd all the miseries above recited, and many more as you please, one amorous conversion prevails and gains more than all the sadness, reflection and examination about the fault or guilt imaginable; especially in venial and ordinary sins. And if any extraordinary disorder happens, it is enough to take the advice of some learned person, or their Ghostly Father. Nay, I will be bold to go further and affirm, that this amorous conversion and confidence in God

had



hath not only place in venial and daily sins, but also in great ones, if God permit us at any time to fall thereinto, yea though it were frequently, and that not of frailty but malice; since contrition and affliction of spirit alone, with a troubled and scrupulous heart, can never raise a soul to perfection, if it be not assisted with this loving confidence, and confident love of the goodness and mercy of God. And the necessity hereof is much more eminent in those who aim not onely to escape the miserable state of sin, but arrive at vertue, and the perfect union with God: which many cannot perswade themselves to comprehend, having their spirits so dejected and comfortless, that they can hardly think a good thought, but lead a life worthy much pity and compassion, because following  
ing

ing their own imagination, they bid adieu to this true and wholesome Doctrine.

---

C H A P. XIII.

*How the Soul must quiet her self every turn, without losing time or profit.*

**T**AKE then this Rule and Method in all the failings you shall make, be they great or little, yea though ten thousand times in the same day you shall have incurr'd the same crime, and that not occasionally, but voluntarily and deliberately. Observe I say inviolably this prescription, that as soon as ever you find your self in fault, you trouble not, nor disquiet your self, nor dwell long upon it, but instantly, as soon as you



you are aware what you have  
done, with humility and confi-  
dence beholding your own frail-  
ty, cast an amorous glance on  
God, and fixing there, say with  
Heart and Mouth, "Lord, I have  
" done like what I am, nor can  
" any thing else be expected at  
" my hands but these and the like  
" transgressions; nor had I stopt  
" here, but plunged my self fur-  
" ther into all wickedness, if thy  
" goodness had permitted it, and  
" left me wholly to my self. I  
" give thee infinite thanks that  
" thou didst not, and for what I  
" have done I am truly sorry.  
" Pardon me for thy own sake,  
" for what thou art, and give me  
" grace to offend thee no more,  
" but admit me again to the fa-  
" vour of thy Friendship. Ha-  
ving done this, lose no time, nor  
quiet of mind; imagining, that  
D per-

perhaps God hath not pardoned you, and the like ; but with full repose go forward in your exercise, as though you had committed no fault : and this , as I have said , not one but an hundred times ; and if need were , every moment : with as much confidence and tranquility the last time as the first. For besides the particular service of God herein, a thousand other advantages are gained by it. Time is not lost in fruitless excuses, further progress is not obstructed , but sin is subdued and mastered with much profit and perfection. This would I gladly inculcate and perswade to scrupulous and disquieted souls ; and they should soon see how different a posture of tranquility they would find themselves in , and pity the blindness of those who so much to their  
cost,



cost, go on still, losing precious time. Note well this, for it is the Key to let us in to all true spiritual progress, and obtain it in short time.

Other necessary directions for this exercise are here wanting, which I have not leisure for at present, they may perhaps follow when you have made use and profit of these. Read these leisurely, and with desire and hopes of fruit, God of his mercy will give more than we poor men can think of, or understand.

You must conceive that this is written for such as aim at particular perfection, and are not in state of mortal sin. For this Medicine will not work upon those who negligently offend God every moment, and pass their life in all wickedness, but they must rather use affliction, and frequent

D 2

be-

bewailing and confession of their  
sins, that so they deprive not  
themselves of remedy by their  
own fault and carelessness,

---

---

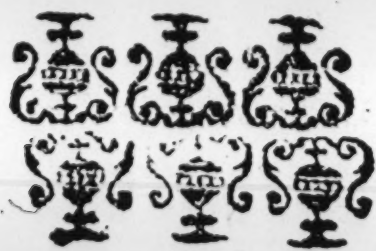


A  
SHORT TREATISE  
Of the three principal  
VERTUES and VOWS  
Of Religious Persons.

---

Written in ITALIAN, by the  
Reverend Father  
GERONIMO DE FERRARA  
To a Lady of great Quality, who was  
about to enter that state of life.

---



---

PARIS, 1665.

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N


121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N

121T A H I T H O N



Of the three principal  
 VERTUES and VOWS  
 Of Religious Persons.

AVING understood (my  
 Dearest in our Lord )  
 the desire you have to  
 abandon the vanities of  
 the World, and adhere to the Ve-  
 racity of your Eternal Spouse;  
 Charity compells me to confirm  
 in few words your holy purpose,  
 and point you out the wayes of  
 God you are to pursue in the hap-  
 py choice you are making: to  
 the end you may not be led astray  
 by the many errors and abusive  
 customs of our dayes. For there  
 are divers who think they quit  
 the world, and in reality do not;  
 but bring it rather with them into

Religion ; and, thus deluded by the arts of Satan, lose the advantages of either state. It is therefore necessary that every Religious person clearly understand, maturely ponderate, ardently love, and faithfully and perseverantly execute, that for which he entered into his Monastery. For in these our dayes many there are who do not so much as comprehend for what end they came thither, and consequently, can never rightly order their lives and actions there, since the knowledge of the end is the direction and guide of all we do. Others know indeed for what purpose they came, but take not the pains attentively to reflect thereon, and so pass their time remissly, without much fruit of progress. Others both know and reflect on the end of their Vocation, but not having



ving their souls enflamed with an affection for it, go lazily on, and supinely discharge their duties with a lukewarm devotion; not calling to mind that of the Prophet, *Accursed be the man who negligently performeth the work of God.* Others in fine, though they know, consider, and love their end and institute, yet fail to execute it vigorously; and consequently, their fervour soon abates, and they after all, lose the fruit and recompence of all their good actions. Which that it may not befall you, in the noble course you are about to run, you must, as I have said, thoroughly penetrate, continually revolve, affectionately embrace, and assiduously put in practice, whatsoever Christian Religion, and especially the excellence of the state properly called Religious, requires

at your hands. For though the end of all Christians be the attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, yet at present I speak not of the last and remotest, but of the most immediate end which all Religious exercises tend to in this life, which is no other but perfect love of God, and our neighbour. Religious persons must pretend and aim at nothing else but to unite, by the ligaments of Charity, their souls to Christ crucified; in such strict sort that they may truly with the Apostle, cry out, *I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me.* So that day and night their souls must entertain no other thought, their Hearts no other affection, their Tongue no other discourse but of their crucified Lord, for whose sake, labour and tribulation, ought not onely to appear no burthen to them, but



on the contrary, the height of their ambition be to suffer some little thing for him, who suffered so great indignities for them; in-  
somuch that with admirable fervour and exultation they may boldly say after the great Apostle, *God forbid that I should glory in any other thing, but in the Cross of my Lord Christ Jesus, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.* To this mark then of love, are the eyes of a good Religious person ever lifted up and attentive, and so much he esteems himself to have gained, or gone diminishing in the accompt of Religious perfection, by how much he finds himself advanced towards, or recoiled from it. He hath learnt from the Apostle, that the scope and end of the Law, is *charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned Faith*

An

And because the perfection of this Charity is not arrived to without purity of heart, he well knows that, who pretends to advance in this Carriere of Divine love, must first purge his affections from all carnality and terrene appetite, and weed out even the least roots and fibres of sensuality and self-love, which either from the corrupt origin of our first birth, or by our own evil customs have got ground in us. This purity is the ultimate and immediate disposition towards the love of Christ : for as soon as ever the world is cast forth, and the heart cleansed from all contagion of sin and affection to Creatures, presently the entire, satiating, and ravishing love of the eternal Spouse Jesus Christ crucified enters and takes full possession thereof. For the obtaining then  
this



this Charity and Purity ( which the true Religious person is to aim at in all he does ) it is requisite, as we have said, that he clearly understand there is no other cause or motive for his abode in the Monastery but only this ; and because reflection and consideration is that which makes a man direct and order all his actions, he must continually fix this before his eys, profoundly meditate thereon ; sincerely procure it, and with ardent anhelations and indefatigable endeavours , press on towards it. And for this end alone are the three Vows of Religion intended, by which the heart may be purified of all transitory and terrestrial affection.

*Of*

---

Of the first Vow.

## Of P O V E R T Y.

**T**He first Vow is *Poverty*, which frees the heart from all inclination to terrene and perishable Goods: which it is not enough to observe in regard of outward things, but the Spouse of Christ must so intrinsically love and value it, that she will by no means consent to possess what is not absolutely necessary for sustainment of her life, and that with difficulty and labour too; placing her whole confidence in Jesus Christ, who feeds all his Creatures; and not in any worldly plenty or providence. This Vow, my dear Sister in our Lord, is little regarded and ill kept in  
our



our days. Many would be under such a Poverty as should let them want for nothing. They leave in the World things of great value to entangle their hearts afterwards in a Monastery with petty trifles; such as are a convenient and neat Cell, a new habit, a fine breviary, or other toys more fit for children, which yet alas, serve to obstruct the purity and peace of their souls, and make them live among others in their Monastery, like barren and fruitless Trees in a flourishing Garden. O miserable sort of Creatures! they abandon Gold, Silver, and precious things, to defile themselves with Dust, Ashes, and the very out-cast of the Earth. True it is, that in the world Husbands love to see their wives adorned with precious Trash, but you must consider that your Heavenly

venly Spouse quite contrary desires to behold you stript of all earthly ornaments, and cloathed with the Poverty your state professes; which how much greater it is both in desire and reality, so much more does it make you resemble him, and consequently deserve to be beloved by him. We read of the Abbot *Arsenius*, formerly High-Steward to the Emperour; that, as in the Court no man habited himself more pompously, being a Layman, so, when afterwards a Monk, none in the whole Hermitage was cloathed more poorly than he. Insomuch that he became an example and pattern of humility and poverty to all the other Hermits, who were confounded to see themselves better clad, being of mean extraction, than he who had been so great and powerful in the

world.



world. In like manner you whose ambition now it is to trample the World under-foot and follow Christ, to exchange your riches and high Estate for his Poverty and Abjection; be sure by how much you surpassed your companions in the world in vanity of apparel and other badges of greatness, by so much to out-vie your Sisters in Religion, in indigent lowliness and all marks of Poverty; for nothing can be more just than that those who to please the world, spared no pains to excel all others, should now in the Lists of Christ, shew no less emulation for his service and satisfaction. This being so, it will not become you to wear new habits of any fine sort of Cloth or Stuff; to have any Medals, or other little instruments of Gold, gilt Breviary, or any Book of value, nor in  
fine,

fine that any thing which your necessity requires, should be costly, or favour in the least of the dignity of your family, or pomp of this wicked world, which you have renounced: as too many ill instructed in the wayes of Christ do now adayes, who being about to enter into a Monastery, make provision of new and precious habits, and other utensils, as though they were going to be married, not with a poor and humble Christ, but some high and proud Potentate of the Earth. Fly, fly (my daughter) this evil custom, and enter into your Monastery poor, naked, and despicable, with a coarse, old, and pieced garment, and all other things about you, which are absolutely necessary for your subsistence, suited not to Vanity but Abjection. Your Breviary, let it be ill bound up, with-



without gildings, miniatures, silk Registers, or other little curiosities; and if it were possible, to pass without any Breviary at all, saying your office jointly with others in a common Book, or borrowing one belonging to the House when you are to pray apart, it were best of all. In like sort, your other little Books of Devotion, let them be had at second hand, and plain as may be; and when you have used them, put them to be kept & remain in some common part of the House. Let your Cell be such, and so furnished, that you may securely leave it open among thieves: scarce allow your self what is necessary, much less any thing superfluous: a hard Bed, a naked Table, a poor Picture; in fine all plain, and favouring of extream Poverty. Far be from your Cell those

those little carved and tr'ck'd up to  
Statua's or Images, which are be-  
come now adayes, as it were, the  
Idols of Nuns, in which they  
spend much time and cost, where  
with they might have relieved  
many poor people. A strict ac-  
compt shall they give in the day  
of Judgment, both of the one and  
of the other, spent unprofitably  
these bables. Place a Crucifix in  
your Oratory, not of Gold or Sil-  
ver, or curious Workmanship, but  
devout and fit to move compas-  
on, which may awaken your piety  
whilest it is there; and being de-  
manded of you, may be parted  
with, without any reluctancy or  
concern. Have a care you de-  
ceive not your self, thinking  
saying, My Parents are rich en-  
ough, and it is a small matter  
them to bestow such things upon  
me; for you are now no longer



to consider what is proportioned  
to their quality, but to your qua-  
lity of Spouse of Christ; nor are  
you only to seek the salvation of  
your own soul, but by good ex-  
ample to gain others also to at-  
tend to theirs. I declare and cer-  
tify to you, that by how much  
you recede from actual Poverty,  
by so much shall peace and puri-  
ty of heart, and consequently  
Charity recede from you. Be-  
ware therefore no less of those  
who are still preaching that Po-  
verty consists not in the actual  
want of exterior things, but in  
the inward affection and intenti-  
on wherewith they are possessed.  
For admit this for truth, yet can  
it not be denied that it is ex-  
tremely difficult, if not impossi-  
ble, to possess exterior things  
without any affection to them:  
which is the cause why the Saints  
who

who have gone before us, although they found their hearts wholly converted to Christ, yet notwithstanding failed not to dispossess themselves of all they had for his sake; knowing how powerfully otherwise they might have been allured again by the charms of those Syrens, to their perdition. This is but too evident in many Religious persons, who abounding as well in what relates to the Community, as to their private Cells, grow tepid in the love of God, remiss in Prayer, slothful, sensual, apt to break silence, murmur, and be impatient; finally covetous, inconstant, envious, proud, and disobedient. All which befalls them for having abandoned the first ground-work and principle of compleat Poverty, and thinking to serve God in a Monastery without becoming poor.



poor as well in body as mind. Let no man therefore, under what pretence soever, perswade you out of the rule I have here prescribed, which is the constant doctrine of all the Saints, and by their continual practice and experience, fortified and made sacred; for if once you assume the liberty to dispense therewith, take it for granted, you shall never more find true content.

---

*Of*

---

Of the second Vow.

## Of C H A S T I T Y.

**T**He second Vow is *Chastity*, which dis-engages and purifies the heart from sensual and carnal affections; which how hard it is to observe with perfection, St. *Augustine* shews us, saying, That among all the combats of Christian Warfare, none is more perilous than that in point of Chastity, where the battery never ceaseth, and the Victory very seldom arriveth. This combat is more fierce in our young and undisciplined Age, and our defence so much more desperate, by how much Chastity requires an integrity not only of Body but Mind. The assaults against this Vertue  
are



are threefold; from outward Agents and occurrences, from the solicitations of our Flesh, and from our inward thoughts and depravation of Mind. Holy Fathers, our predecessors and Leaders in this spiritual conflict, have assigned us on the contrary three Bulwarks and Ramparts for our security against them; Enclosure, Penitential Austerities, and continual Exercise of Mind or Body. Whoever neglects any of these, let him despair of Victory. Nor is it enough, as to the first of these remedies, that the Convent door be kept alwayes shut; the Spouse of Christ must not onely fly into a Monastery to hide her self from the World, but even there seek a farther retreat. Many in our times put themselves within four Walls, but by their good will spend all the day at the Turn or  
E Grate;

Grate ; and under pretext of spirit and piety, continually sit chatting with their friends and relations, and invite them to make frequent visits; whereas if they were truly spiritualized they would not so much as lift up their eyes to behold them ; but, without making any accompt of their displeasure, chase them away with rude words and behaviour. Let them read the Holy Hermits lives and they shall find there, Sons who would not so much as endure the presence of their Mothers, Brothers who banished their Sisters, Sisters who avoided their Brothers. They well remembered that saying of our Saviour, *I came not to send peace into the world, but the sword ; to separate the son from his father, the daughter from her mother, the daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law, and to make men*  
esteem



*esteem for Enemies those of their own Family. Wherefore my beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, as soon as you put your foot into the Convent, cast off all your Relations; and so cast them off that you never more desire to see or hear any of them, especially of the other sex: that you may obey the voice of the Eternal Father, saying to the Spouse of his Dear Son Christ Jesus. Hear, my daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people, and thy fathers house, and the King shall be enamoured of thy beauty: for it is impossible to frequent conversation and endeavour to appear gracious and agreeable in the sight of secular persons, as these luke-warm Nuns do, whom I mentioned, without filling the fancie with many vain and carnal desires. Having thus in good*

earnest renounced and bid adieu to the World, and consequently all solicitations from abroad, you are to guard the second Post against the domestick ambushes of the flesh, which never ceaseth to make War upon the spirit, as it is written, *The flesh covets the overthrow of the spirit, and the spirit in like manner of the flesh.* This is to be performed by Penance and Mortification, wherein a moderation is required, that it may neither be excessive and destructive, nor deficient and disproportioned to your necessity; which mediocrity being difficult enough to beginners, no better rule can be given them, than to take advice of discreet and experienced spiritual Directors. But this I must say, the servant of Christ must still lean more to austerity than relaxation; ever streightning her self



self a little in point of mear, drink, sleep, and other exigencies of the Body, all which are to be taken onely medicinally; considering what the Apostle says, that the *discharge of our duties must be according to Reason and Discretion*. There remains a third danger and defence in point of idle thoughts; to which we have opposed Continual employment of Mind and Body. For this reason our holy Founders have for every hour of the day prescribed either spiritual exercises, as reading good Books, singing psalms and devout hymns, meditation and prayer; or corporal, that is, manual employments, according to that of *St. Hierom, Ever be doing some good work that the Devil may never find you idle*. These three Lessons diligently practised, will secure and preserve that virginal

Purity which is so acceptable to your heavenly Spouse.

---

*Of the third Vow.*

OF OBEDIENCE.

**T**He third Vow is *Obedience*, which quells all pride and disordinate ambition of the soule: a Vertue as the Prophet reacheth us, *preferable to, and more acceptable then sacrifice.* In the observance whereof, if you desire to signalize and recommend yourself to your heavenly Spouse, *who made himself obedient to death, even the death of the Cross,* you must imitate a certain Monk, who in little time arrived to much perfection. He entering into the Monastery, said within himself, from henceforth (Friend) you shall be treated



treated just as I was wont to use my Afs; The Afs goes which way soever you lead him, bears a great burthen, takes in good part all the affronts and stripes they give him, and with all this makes no complaint. So forgetting all the empty glory of the World, you must only remember that we are all equally sons of *Adam*, equally mortal and subject to all infirmities of Nature; and above all bear in mind the humility of our blessed Saviour; who, being God, made himself liable to the command of his Creatures *Mary* and *Joseph*, that men, proud men, may think it no scorn to obey one another. Conclude then with your self, that you go to serve, and not to be waited on; to obey and not command; to subject your self in fine, to those, who in the world perhaps might have

E 4 thought

thought themselves very happy to have served or attended on you. Resolve moreover not only to submit and become obedient to your Superior, but to your Equals also, and even to the meanest in the House; as the Son of God *came not to be served but serve, and give his life for the redemption of many.* Think how his whole life was a perpetual exercise of humility, think how pride was the source of all misery, which drew *Lucifer* and his fellow Angels from the height of Heaven, to the lowest Abyss; think how it is written, *That he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself, exalted.* In a word, when you are entering the Monastery, make account you know neither good nor evil, but are to learn your lesson there. Never dispute, or contradict any one,



one, or prefer your own sentiment or skill. Our Lord and great Master tells us that, *unless we turn back and become as little ones, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Let us then affect the lowest place, and enter as children to learn not to teach: for whatsoever Religious, especially being young, thinks he knows something, and prizes his own Judgment, he is yet ignorant of the wayes of God, and knows not whither he is going. Once more I return to say, that these three Vows were instituted to purifie the soul from all affections to created things, as well exterior as interior; that is, self-love and opinion of our own excellency: that so divested of all vain complacence, she may be cloathed with Charity, and become as it were, one and the same thing.

E S.

with.

with her crucified Lord and Saviour. And to this self same end tend all the other practises of Religion, Fastings, Watchings, Labours, Silence, and Prayer. And if we fix not our eye perpetually on this Standard, we can never know whether we profit in Religion, or slide back. If then you desire to be as happy as this world and the next can make you, quit, quit, according to your design, all the Vanities here below; but quit them not in part, but in whole, and pass over entirely into God, in whose Love alone, can Peace and true Repose be found; according to that of St. *Augustine*, *Thou hast made us O Lord for thee, and restless is our heart, till it repose in thee.* Observe diligently what I have here written; to which continual Prayer will assist and enable you, which ought to be  
the



the only both study and pastime of Religious persons. But forasmuch as the gift of Prayer cannot be obtained but through silence and holy occupations; great care must be had at all times to refrain the tongue; for as Saint James assures us, *He who thinks himself Religious and bridles not his Tongue, but seduceth his own heart, his Religion is vain.* Giving us to understand, that by no other instrument or address can the Devil sooner over-reach and draw into his snares Religious persons, than by the Tongue; under pretence of Recreation, or other innocent divertisement, procuring first too much talk, then by degrees, detractions and murmurings; whilst the advertisement of Solomon is forgotten, saying, that *in much speech sin will not be kept out, and that it destroys the force*

force of Prayer; the efficacy where-  
of the Devil apprehends more  
than any thing else, and without  
which, neither Religious persons  
nor Institutes, are any terrour  
to him. And if this caution and  
bridle of the tongue be necessary  
for all Religious, much more for  
sacred Virgins, the Spouses of  
Christ, who ought to be found so  
modest and bashful, as scarce to  
be able to reply when they are  
interrogated; much less ask any  
curious and unprofitable questi-  
ons. This was the example given  
them by that blessed Virgin, who  
when many things of great im-  
portance were proposed by the  
Angel, with fear and trouble of  
mind, answered in few words, and  
such onely as were precisely ne-  
cessary to his message. Thus I  
have shewed, or at least, pointed  
at the prejudice and diminution of  
vigour



vigour and fervour in their souls, which Religious incur by talkativeness, and the disquiet and distraction they give themselves and others. But silence must necessarily be accompanied with some holy employment, for the one cannot subsist without the other, but both together beget, as father and mother, that elevation of mind to God, of which the Prophet saith, *Happy is the man who bears the yoke from his youth, he shall sit solitarily and hold his peace, and lift up his soul above himself.* Accustom your self then to solitude, especially at the times appointed by your rule, and neither seek nor admit any particular friendships, but carry your self equally and indifferently towards all; yet so that you avoid and fly all you can the conversation of those Sisters, if any such there be in the House, who

who are addicted to murmur; or any kind of dissoluteness; and on the contrary, willingly apply your self to those who have the good odor and spirit of Devotion, and are in their behaviour grave and exemplar. I call grave, not those who are high minded and reserved through Pride; but those who are silent, humble, and meek of conversation, of whom you may alwayes reap some fruit and spiritual advantage. Now in this solitude you are to exercise your self in reading the holy Scriptures and Writings of holy Fathers: and particularly I recommend to you, next to the holy Scriptures, the making your self conversant in the Collations of the holy Fathers, written by *Saint John Cassian*, and the Lives of the Primitive Hermits, written by *St. Hierom*. After which respective



ative Lectures you are to meditate and think with your self, how you may best put in practice what you have read. To this Meditation succeeds again Prayer, in which you must lift up your heart to God, beseeching him to give you the same grace he bestowed on those holy persons, that you may in like manner serve him, as well in prosperity as adversity, with a pure, simple, and sincere heart. Thus shall you ever be happily employed in divine occupations. And the same may you do and observe in exterior exercises, letting your understanding entertain it self with spiritual things, whilest you sow or work with your hands. And by degrees your Celestial Spouse will bestow upon you the gift of Contemplation, in which you shall relish somewhat which the World knows

88      *Of the three Vows &c.*

knows not of, and live ever content & satisfied; accompting all as nothing for the passing sweetness of the love of Christ. Thus finally shall you arrive to the glory of Heaven; and I beseech you forget not to pray for me poor sinner, that God give me his grace also to arrive with you to the triumph of his eternal blifs, who is blessed for ever and ever. *Amen.*

---

*An-*



---

*Another short Instruction written by  
the same Father, to a person of  
quality in the World.*

**A**bove all things love God with your whole heart, and resolve to procure his honour before the salvation of your own soul. With all exactitude and diligence purifie your conscience by frequent Confessions. Fly all affections to terrene objects, Communicate often with great devotion, Think not your self better than any other, but rather worse, how great a sinner soever he be: Judge ill of none, but always favourably: Pass your life in great silence: Avoid prophane conversations and entertainments: Affect solitude as much as is compatible with your state: Farr be all words.

words of repining, detraction, scornfulness, jesting, or other impertinence from your ears, much more from your mouth. Pray often and use contemplation almost continually. Use all industry to keep your family in Peace and good order. Let not the least affectation or pride appear in your words or behaviour. Be not too familiar with those under your charge, but use towards them a mild kind of gravity. Give example of good life and conversation to all, spare not to reprehend continually those who do amiss, and to exhort them to better. Cherish Chastity in your house, particularly in those of tender years. Shew your self most adverse to all dissoluteness, sharply rebuking all words, deportments, or fashion of habits tending there to. Use not partiality in distributing



ing to every one his share, or reward, according to his merit. Be compassionate towards the Poor, & help them as much as possible, for this is very acceptable in the sight of God. Be affable to all, especially those in misery or affliction, and do all the good offices for them you may. In prosperity be humble of heart, in adversity patient. Beg continually of God to instruct you how to perform his will, to proceed from Vertue to Vertue, to correspond with his holy Inspirations; for the Unction of the Holy Ghost is the best Master. Pray also in particular for perseverance, living in continual fear, and having God alwayes before your eyes. Renew every day your good purposes, and whilest you eat, work, or travel, endeavour to meditate on some devout passage or other.

In

In fine, in all times and places have recourse secretly to the blessed Jesus lodged in your heart, and never let his Incarnation and Passion depart from your memory; for by how much the more you shall exercise your self in this holy contemplation, by so much more sweetness shall you find therein, and more consolations and favours shall you receive from God (which humane prudence can neither relish nor arrive to) and you shall experience in your heart a continual burning of the fire of Charity, and vehement desire to be freed from this world and enjoy God, who liveth and reigneth world without end. *Amen.*

*FINIS.*



Fund

Plain, 1942

Collation

A<sup>6</sup>(A<sub>1</sub> blank)B-D<sup>12</sup>E<sup>11</sup>  
(E<sub>11</sub> blank)

Author

Pedro de Alcántara,

Saint, supposed author

Rare Book Room

Me45

P3420

Call no. D3

g665

Richard

Harcourt  
in the  
year  
1712

~~James~~

Wm



Me45

P3420

D3

8665



YALE UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

---

1942